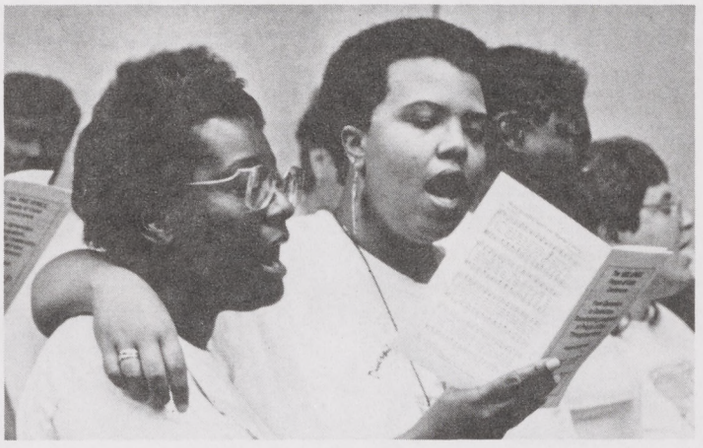
Keeping in touch

News and notes from
the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

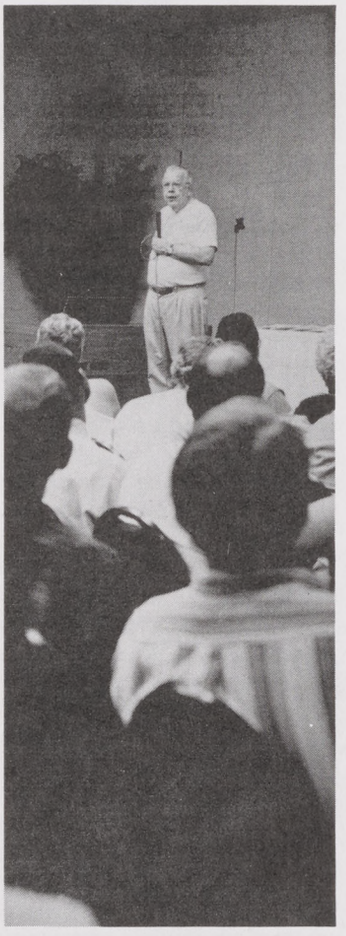
October 1992

Conferences Inspire and Challenge



Rev. Carolyn Mobley of Houston, TX, left, and Ms. Nadine Rawls of Denton, TX, sing together during conference worship.

Fellowship staff members Ms. Nancy Fackrell and Mr. Nathan Meckley handled registration and other conference logistics. Above, they register Mr. Ramon Flores of El Paso, TX.



Rev. Lyle Schaller addresses the Leadership Conference.

Photos by Rev. Kittredge Cherry

Schaller Urges UFMCC to Grow

UFMCC was urged to define its identity and grow by church development expert Lyle Schaller at the 1992 Church Leadership Conference Aug. 25-27 in Phoenix, AZ.

Registration was 162 for the international clergy and lay leadership conference, which featured panel discussions and worship in addition to a full schedule of presentations by Rev. Schaller. He spoke from his experience both as the father of a gay son and as a nationally acclaimed consultant on church organization in the United States.

(see Schaller, page 6)

Kelly Calls UFMCC to Hope

Bishop Leontine Kelly used her prophetic voice to electrify the People of Color Conference held in Phoenix, AZ, Aug. 28-30. With 131 registrants, this was one of UFMCC's largest People of Color Conferences ever.

"She should run for president of the USA," one conference goer wrote on the conference evaluation form. Others praised her as "dynamic," "outstanding," "uplifting spiritually" and "truly called of the Lord."

"You cannot claim the love of Jesus Christ and just take whatever comes your way as if

(see Kelly, page 6)

UFMCC Celebrates 24 Years

World Church Extension will be the focus of this year's Fellowship Sunday celebrations.

Every October each UFMCC church is asked to designate a Fellowship Sunday to commemorate UFMCC's founding and to receive a special offering that day. "This year I want us to honor the founding of our denomination by contributing to the ongoing work of World Church Extension," said Rev. Perry, UFMCC moderator.

UFMCC's 24th anniversary comes at a time of new threats to the gay and lesbian community from the religious right around the world. In such times as these, Rev. Perry draws strength from the impact that UFMCC has made on the world in its first 24 years. "I think of the brave people who have carried the vision of MCC worldwide into cultures even more

(see 24 Years, page 4)

How Do UFMCC Structures Match Its Message?

By Rev. Kittredge Cherry

"How do we make love happen structurally? How do we make justice happen in structure?"

These basic questions fascinate the Elders' Task Force on Systems and Structures, especially Rev. Wendy Foxworth, task force chair, who posed them in a recent interview.

Rev. Foxworth, pastor of MCC Austin, TX, describes herself as a "self-taught administrator" with a bachelor's degree in education, experience as a sales manager and enthusiasm for structures and systems. "Administration is what allows and upholds everything else and I *love* it," she smiled.

The nine-member task force is busy preparing information and recommendations about UFMCC structures for discussion and action at General Conference in August 1993 and beyond. Since its creation in 1989, the task force has collected data about how well current structures are functioning through general surveys, district conference forums, and contacts with UFMCC leadership.

"Everyone is saying, 'It's not working now the way it did.' It seems that the people of UFMCC are saying we need to even further decentralize our structure," Rev. Foxworth said.

The task force has been assigned to study several specific areas, including funding of Fellowship-level activities, district boundaries, the role of elders and clergy, seating of lay pastors at conferences and the structure of World Church Extension.

Rev. Wendy Foxworth

In almost every area, the task force has heard a common complaint: "We have incredible expectations and so little money," Rev. Foxworth said. "Somehow we need to get reality-based and realize that we have 'x' amount of funds to do this thing called ministry."

The many issues can be summarized in two basic questions, Rev. Foxworth said: "Is the vision that God loves all people as they are — the vision Troy Perry got so long ago — still our vision? If it is, is our structure embodying that or not?"

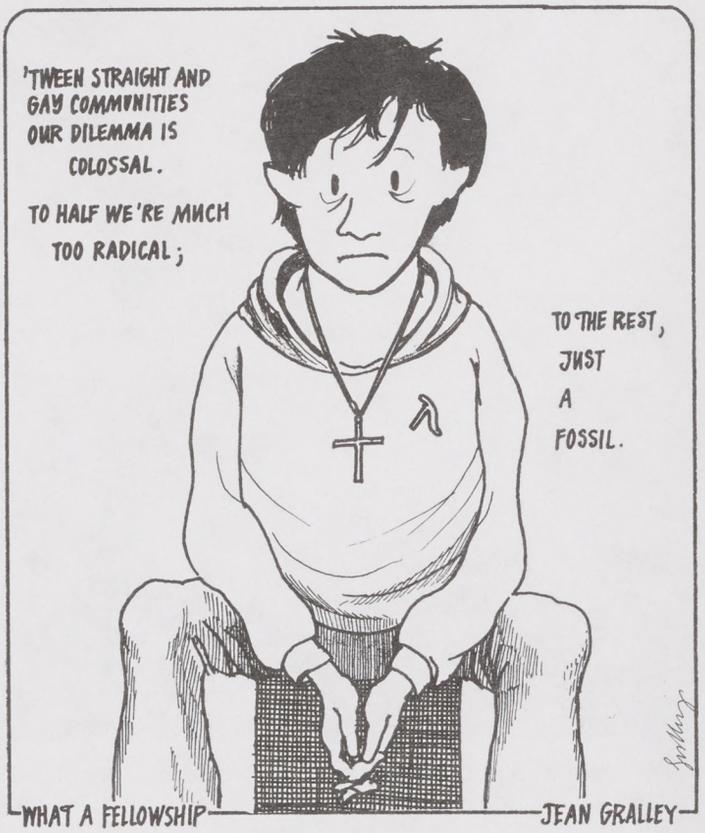
Rev. Foxworth was appointed chair of the task force in 1991 after Rev. David Farrell resigned the position for health reasons. She describes the task force as a "phenomenal mix" of clergy and lay people from three continents; they are women and men of theological and ethnic diversity. Task force members are Mr. Bernard Barbour, Rev. Darlene Garner, Ms. Chris Messenger, Rev. Christine Oscar, Elder Larry Rodriguez, Ms. JoNee Shelton, Rev. Greg Smith, and Rev. Larry Uhrig.

As she surveys UFMCC's structures, Rev. Foxworth finds it useful to remember that the denomination is 24 years old. "I have this theory that every gay or lesbian person goes through two puberties. In the first, we go through a time when we try to be good heterosexuals. So it doesn't surprise me that as a denomination we started out highly clericalized. We wanted to look like everyone else," she said.

"In the second puberty we find out who we are. We learn we have all that we need to do what we need to do, and we're a new creation that can do things in a new way.

"UFMCC has come full circle to re-embrace who we are."

A series of articles in future issues of *Keeping in Touch* will reveal the specific survey findings of the task force, a historical reflection on structures and systems in UFMCC, and the guiding principles upon which task force recommendations will be made at General Conference in July 1993. ❐


'TWEEN STRAIGHT AND GAY COMMUNITIES OUR DILEMMA IS COLOSSAL.
TO HALF WE'RE MUCH TOO RADICAL;
TO THE REST, JUST A FOSSIL.
WHAT A FELLOWSHIP
JEAN GRALLEY

Keeping in Touch is a monthly publication of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. We are a church of the lesbian and gay community, open to all. Our mission is to call people to new life through the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ, confront injustice through Christian social action, and create a community of healing and reconciliation.

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From

The UFMCC Leadership Conference and The People of Color Conference

BOOKS

_____	Seven Day A Week Church	by Lyle Schaller	$ 11.50
_____	Forty-Four Ways to Expand The Financial Base of Your Congregation	by Lyle Schaller	$ 11.50
_____	Choices For Churches	by Lyle Schaller	$ 11.50
_____	Power of Vision	by George Barna	$ 14.50
_____	Frog In The Kettle	by George Barna	$ 14.50
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_____	Antagonists in the Church	by Kenneth Hansk	$ 12.50

TAPES

Leadership Conference Plenary Sessions by Lyle Schaller

_____ #1 Contemporary Trends Affecting Congregational Life

_____ #2 The "Niche Church" Has Replaced The Geographical Church

_____ #3 Pitfalls in the Road Ahead of Us

_____ #4 The Post-1969 Generation: A New and Different Generation

_____ #5 Who is Your Competition? Today? Tomorrow?

COST: Single Tape $ 8.75 each
Set of all Five Tapes $ 33.00

People of Color Conference Tapes

_____ Worship Service - Rev. Charlotte Strayhorn

_____ Worship Service - Juanita Majel, preaching

_____ Luncheon with Speaker - Bishop Leontine Kelly

_____ Plenary with Speaker - Bishop Leontine Kelly

_____ Worship Service - Rev. Elder Jean White, preaching

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24 Years

(continued from page 1)

hostile than the USA," he said.

"I look at people like Rev. Roberto Gonzalez in Argentina and the saints there who have challenged the government and won.

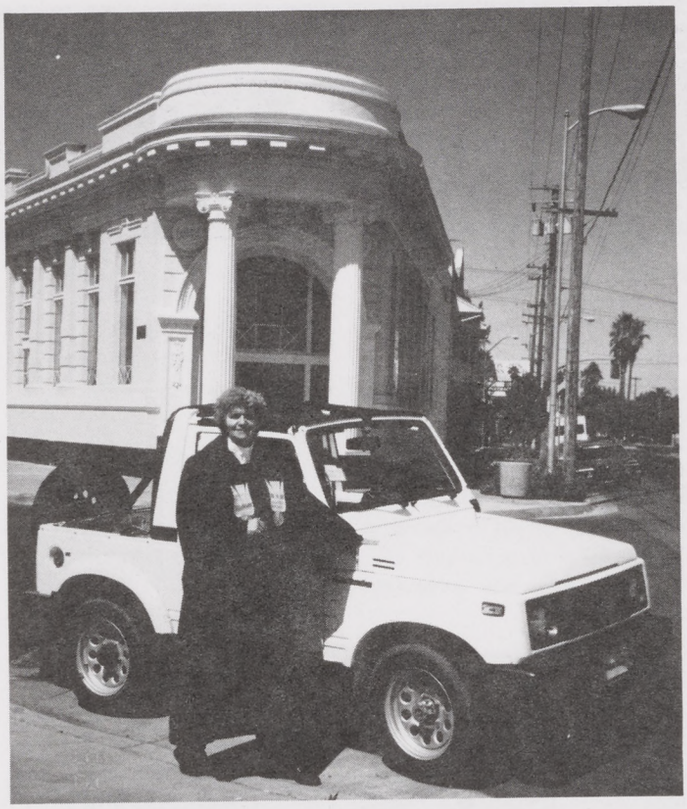
"And Rev. Tomas Garcia in Mexico who has challenged the archbishop over his homophobic stand.

"And Rev. Elder Jean White and the MCCers who attended the recent International Lesbian and Gay Association meeting in Paris, where police beat some demonstrators. I can only have admiration for them."

The situation in the United States also reminds him that UFMCC must continue to fulfill its historical role by proclaiming God's love for all people, including gay men and lesbians. In recent months Rev. Perry has spoken at rallies in Colorado and Oregon against homophobic state constitutional amendments that have been proposed by right-wing religious groups.

For Rev. Perry, the most emotional moment of his Colorado trip came at a rally in Fort Collins when a French Jew and Holocaust survivor compared the current political scene to the rise of the Nazis before World War II. "I almost cried when I saw someone with a tattoo put on his arm by the Nazis get up to speak," he said. "This gentleman didn't have to be hit over the head to see discrimination. He knew it because he had lived it before."

The man's words echoed in Rev. Perry's mind as he watched the Republican national convention. "I've never been able to imagine how Germany could allow the Nazis to take over, but now I know," he said. ❐



Rev. Elder Freda Smith stands with her new jeep in front of River City MCC.

Rev. Smith Marks 20 Years

Rev. Elder Freda Smith celebrated her 20th anniversary as pastor of River City MCC, Sacramento, CA, on Aug. 21-23. Hers is the longest pastorate in UFMCC.

Rev. Smith was the first woman pastor in UFMCC and the first woman elected to the Board of Elders. She was instrumental in inclusifying the Fellowship's language. She received the "Women in History Award" in 1991 from the Sacramento History Museum, under the category of "Courage."

River City MCC marked its 21st year on the same weekend. In July the church set a new record by feeding 6,000 individuals during the month.

"River City MCC has seen phenomenal growth," said Rev. Elder Troy Perry, UFMCC founder and moderator. Sunday worship attendance averages 400 and the church owns in excess of $1.3 million in property with liabilities of only $100,000, he said.

"Freda Smith is proof that women in UFMCC are as capable of ministry — and that includes building and pastoring large church congregations — as any man," Rev. Perry said.

River City MCC presented Rev. Smith with a brand-new Suzuki Samurai in honor of her anniversary and Rev. Perry honored Rev. Smith with a commendation from the General Council. ❐

Positions Available

The Mid-Central District is seeking a district coordinator. This full-time salaried position will become open in May 1993. Interested persons may write: Rev. Celena M. Duncan, Special Nominations Committee Chair, 8804 W. 70th Terrace, Merriam, KS 66204.

Reconciliation MCC of Grand Rapids, MI, is seeking a full-time pastor. For more information, contact Pastoral Search Committee, c/o Reconciliation MCC, P.O. Box 1259, Grand Rapids, MI 49501.

UFMCC's Fund For Overcoming Racism is seeking two trustees, one person of color and one white person. Trustees serve four-year terms on a voluntary basis. Candidates should mail a resume by Oct. 31 to: George Padilla, FOR Fund Chair, 316 W. Ellis Ave., Inglewood, CA 90302.

MCC at the California Men's Colony, Grover City, CA, is seeking a part-time pastor and assistant. Those interested should contact Rev. Randy Lester, P.O. Box 1117, Grover City, CA 93483, or phone (805) 481-9376 by Dec. 1.

The Board of Trustees of Samaritan College in Europe wishes to appoint a principal (equivalent to the president in U.S. terminology). The position doesn't carry a full-time salary, but remuneration is negotiable. For more information write Rev. Paul Whiting, Chair, Board of Trustees, 16 Brantwood Terrace, Manchester M91LU, England.

Holy Covenant MCC, Hinsdale, IL is searching for a new pastor. Anyone interested contact Bruce Myers, c/o Holy Covenant MCC, 17 W. Maple, Hinsdale, IL 60521. ❐

Hurricane Andrew Hits Miami MCCers

Two major hurricanes left UFMCC churches unharmed, but six families at Christ MCC in Miami, FL, lost everything to Hurricane Andrew in late August.

Donations for the families are being collected in the MCC Miami Relief Fund, Christ MCC, 7701 SW 76th Ave., Miami, FL 33143. Christ MCC was without power for nearly a week, but otherwise it and other MCC churches in Florida were not damaged.

In early September Hurricane Iniki caused severe damage in Hawaii, but MCC churches and members weathered the storm safely. ❐

Around The Fellowship

Praises

Trinity MCC, Gainesville, FL, dedicated a new worship center May 17. "The congregation constructed the building themselves," said **Rev. Jerry Seay**, pastor.

MCC Adelaide, Australia, has opened a Friday evening coffee shop in Adelaide in conjunction with lesbian and gay-positive groups from other denominations.

Rev. Harry Stock, pastor of **MCC of the Disciples**, Washington, DC, will be a guest speaker and workshop leader at the General Conference of the Church of the Brethren/Mennonite Council on Gay/Lesbian Concerns Oct. 9-10 in Denver, CO. ❐

Transitions

Muskegon MCC in Muskegon Heights, MI, elected **Rev. Dan Brauer** as pastor.

Rev. Jill Farnham and **Rev. Jane Jerome** were installed Aug. 16 as co-pastors of **MCC in the Hudson Valley**, Albany, NY. They served previously as associate pastors at **MCC of Northern Virginia** in Falls Church.

MCC of the Spirit in Harrisburg, PA, installed **Rev. Eva O'Diam** as pastor July 25 with an overflow crowd of 164 people in attendance.

Rev. Jerry Seay, transfer clergy, was installed as pastor of **Trinity MCC** in Gainesville, FL, Aug. 1.

Rev. Marna Montoure has become associate pastor at **Mount Vernon MCC**, Seattle, WA.

Rev. Don Magill has been approved as pastor of **MCC of the Siskiyous**, Medford, OR.

Dr. Nancy Jose became director of discipleship at **Cathedral of Hope MCC**, Dallas, TX.

The following pastors resigned recently: **Rev. Ralph Conrad**, Good Shepherd Parish MCC, Chicago, IL, effective June 30; **Rev. Michael Niece**, New Spirit MCC, Cincinnati, OH, effective Aug. 31; **Rev. David Deppe**, transfer clergy, Holy Covenant MCC, Hinsdale, IL, effective July 26; **Rev. Ian Westby**, Pax Christi MCC, Southampton, England, effective Aug. 12; **Rev. Jon Haack**, Christ's Temple MCC, Corpus Christi, TX, effective Sept. 6; **Rev. Beau McDaniels**, Christ the King MCC, Oklahoma City, OK, effective Sept. 30; **Rev. Ken Bland**, Delta Harvest MCC, Stockton, CA, effective Aug. 1. **Rev. Randy Nunnelee** resigned as full-time program director at MCC Austin, TX. ❐

In Memory

Rev. Floyd Randall Hill

Rev. Floyd Randall Hill, former UFMCC clergy, died Aug. 1 of complications due to AIDS. He was 51.

Rev. Hill pastored MCC churches in Tucson, AZ; Sarasota, FL; and Knoxville, TN. At the time of his death, he was pastoring an independent church in San Francisco, CA.

When he died, by his side were his lover of 10 years, Marc Johnson; his mother and a few close friends. ❐

Prayers

Prayers are requested for the following UFMCC clergy with AIDS-related health concerns: **Rev. Cal Lindley**, MCC San Diego, CA; **Rev. David Eckert**, Delta Harvest MCC, Stockton, CA; and **Rev. Brian Hanlon**, MCC Omaha, NE.

Epiphany Women's Community of Preston, Victoria, Australia, has voted to withdraw from UFMCC.

The **Northeast District Committee** decided to officially close **MCC Providence**, RI.

Rev. Jodi Mekkers, pastor of **MCC at Boise**, ID, is recovering from a heart attack in August.

Rev. Dee Lamb of Houston, TX, continues her bout with cancer. ❐

Top 20 Tithes - Aug. 1992

1.	MCC of the Resurrection, Houston, TX	US$	2,425.66
2.	MCC Washington, Washington, DC		2,344.97
3.	Church/Holy Spirit MCC, Ft. Lauderdale, FL		2,282.77
4.	MCC Long Beach, Long Beach, CA		1,756.31
5.	MCC Toronto, Ontario, Canada	CAN$	1,735.57
6.	MCC San Francisco, San Francisco, CA		1,699.66
7.	MCC of the Rockies, Denver, CO		1,581.29
8.	Church of the Trinity MCC, Sarasota, FL		1,168.19
9.	Agape' MCC, Ft. Worth, TX		1,112.81
10.	King of Peace MCC, St. Petersburg, FL		992.86
11.	MCC New York, New York City, NY		865.73
12.	Church of Our Savior MCC, Boca Raton, FL		863.70
13.	All God's Children MCC, Minneapolis, MN		784.91
14.	Morning Star MCC, Worcester, MA		718.40
15.	MCC Albuquerque, Albuquerque, NM		638.64
16.	MCC Ocean of Life, Costa Mesa, CA		605.75
17.	Christ Chapel MCC, Santa Ana, CA		597.48
18.	MCC Louisville, Louisville, KY		596.20
19.	MCC of Northern Virginia, Falls Church, VA		559.45
20.	MCC Ottawa, Ontario, Canada	CAN$	504.12

{These figures reflect the 10 percent of each local church's monthly income that is reported to Fellowship headquarters.}

Top 20 Per Capita - Aug. 1992

1.	MCC Ottawa, Ontario, Canada	CAN$	56.64
2.	MCC Silverlake, Los Angeles, CA	US$	35.07
3.	Maranatha Fellowship MCC, Houston, TX		27.84
4.	MCC Panama City, Panama City, FL		24.82
5.	MCC of the Rockies, Denver, CO		24.79
6.	Pikes Peak MCC, Colorado Springs, CO		24.39
7.	MCC Ocean of Life, Costa Mesa, CA		23.03
8.	New Hope MCC, Milwaukee, WI		22.14
9.	Faith Eternal MCC, Springfield, IL		21.94
10.	MCC Johnson County, Lenexa, KS		21.34
11.	MCC of Northern Virginia, Falls Church, VA		19.56
12.	Church of the Resurrection MCC, Chicago, IL		18.81
13.	New Life MCC, Berkeley, CA		18.57
14.	MCC of the Living Faith, St. Louis, MO		18.32
15.	MCC Long Beach, Long Beach, CA		17.99
16.	MCC Dayton Parish, Dayton, OH		17.88
17.	Open Arms MCC, Rochester, NY		17.87
18.	Church With A Vision MCC, Longview, TX		17.87
19.	MCC Washington, Washington, DC		17.55
20.	MCC Shepherd of the Plains, Great Falls, MT		17.34

{These figures reflect average individual weekly offering to the local church.}

Kelly

(continued from page 1)

God sent it. You are empowered to protest," said Bishop Kelly, a United Methodist who was the first African American woman to be elected bishop in a major Christian denomination in the United States.

Speaking with fiery passion, she described how racism, homophobia, pollution, runaway prison construction and war are all contributing to the "deep crisis of spirit" in America today.

"God moves in spaces that other people deny through people that are willing to be used anyway. God does work through the most unlikely to make a difference in history," she said.

Her complete speech, as well as other presentations at the People of Color Conference, are available on tape. Details are on page 3.

The many workshops at the conference included "Can People of Color Effectively Minister in UFMCC?" "AIDS in Minority Countries," "A White Feminist Struggles with Race and Class," and "Creating a Vision for the '90s and Beyond."

The vision-seeking workshops led to development of the most comprehensive long-range plan ever developed by the Department of People of Color (DPOC). During the DPOC business meeting, a document titled "Creating a Vision for the '90s and Beyond'" was accepted unanimously as DPOC's goals and objectives for the immediate future. This document creates four new divisions within DPOC (in addition to the division of White People Healing Racism): AIDS ministry, training, education, and evangelism.

Mr. Bernard Barbour of Houston, TX, was elected as the nominee for DPOC executive director. His nomination will be submitted to the General Council for approval in October. More details on the DPOC business meeting will be included in the November *Keeping in Touch.* ❐

Schaller

(continued from page 1)

"Do you see yourselves Number One as a Christ worshipping community? Or do you see yourselves as primarily gay and lesbian?" Rev. Schaller asked. "Your answer will lead you in two different directions." He went on to discuss the pros and cons of both identities.

"Being gay and lesbian is a unifying principle, while the word 'Christian' has for 2,000 years been a divisive term. I think it's been more divisive than the issue of sexual orientation," Rev. Schaller said.

However, he said UFMCC's lesbian and gay focus projects an "exclusionary" national image. He urged UFMCC to reach out to gay and lesbian youth and people like himself: "The simplest, easiest way for MCC to double its size is to become a reconciling community between mature parents and adult children who are gay and lesbian."

He also urged UFMCC congregations to grow by promoting a strength that they may not recognize. "As I look at it from the outside, your distinctive characteristic is your skill in dealing with dying, grief and death," he said.

Rev. Schaller added that UFMCC's experience with grief ministry also poses challenges. "The main difference between you and the heterosexual churches is that they specialize in baptisms and you specialize in funerals. How much time is involved in baptism compared to the process of dying and grief? You specialize in labor-intensive ministries and they specialize in the low-cost ministries," he said.

How to be Large and Diverse

Rev. Schaller said churches tend to fall into three categories:

Bishop Leontine Kelly electrifies the People of Color Conference

▼A diverse congregation that stays together because it is small enough for everyone to know each other personally. "The natural tendency is to go down the small-church road with a minister on food stamps. That's what I see as one of your pitfalls," he warned.

▼A large congregation held together by a narrow belief system. "The easiest way to be a big church is to have a narrow belief system," he said.

▼Or a large, diverse congregation comprised of many smaller homogeneous congregations that are different from each other. "This is the most time-consuming and complicated model for church, and the one most of you say could fit us," he said. For example, he said that as MCC churches add staff, they may want to try to reach four audiences: gay men who want a male pastor, gay men who want a female pastor, lesbians who want a male pastor, and lesbians who want a female pastor.

How Small is Too Small?

"My question for MCC is: What do you project out as a minimum normative size?" Rev. Schaller asked. "To have a full-time, fully credentialed pastor, you need 125 to 150 people at church."

A minimum of 125 people is needed, he said, to offer choices in worship and activities and to appropriately use the talents of volunteers.

"When that critical volunteer leaves a congregation of 125, you shrug. When the pillar who is one of seven leaves, you hurt. And every congregation is a passing parade," he added.

A final reason for ensuring that every congregation has at least 125 members, he said, is to make an impact on the community. "You need enough folks to make a credible witness. You're *not* 11 kooks!"

A Denomination or a Movement?

"I'm intrigued as I spoke to you about Troy Perry," he told the audience. "The people who spoke to me without exception described him as the head or founder of our movement. Who is the poor devil who's going to be Troy's successor?"

Rev. Schaller noted that whoever follows Rev. Perry as moderator of UFMCC will not be the founder.

"MCC can choose to be a denomination whose primary aim is to take care of itself or to remain a cutting-edge movement," he said. "Will Troy's successor be a functionary or a prophet? If it's a functionary MCC will be a denomination, but if it's a prophet MCC will be a movement."

For a full understanding of Rev. Schaller's ideas, everyone is urged to purchase his books and tapes. Tapes of all five of his presentations at the Leadership Conference are on sale now. Details are on page 3. ❐